

News in brief

◆ **An explosion was heard in Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh yesterday and the cause was not immediately known.** Several witnesses also reported hearing two loud bangs and seeing a small plume of smoke above the capital just before 1 P.M. local time (10 A.M. GMT). Saudi-owned Al Arabiya TV cited local reports of an explosion and videos circulating on social media purporting to show a missile being intercepted over Riyadh.



**Blast heard in Saudi capital Riyadh**

◆ **Donald Trump opened an office in Florida on Monday that will handle his duties as a former US president and seek to further his administration's agenda.** "The Office will be responsible for managing President Trump's correspondence, public statements, appearances, and official activities to advance the interests of the United States and to carry on the agenda of the Trump Administration through advocacy, organizing, and public activism," a statement said. Before leaving office, Trump talked with associates about forming a political party called the "Patriot Party," the Wall Street Journal reported.

**Trump opens Florida office**



◆ **Britain will announce whether it will bring in mandatory quarantine in hotels for some or all arrivals,** the country's coronavirus vaccination minister said as he warned the public not to book summer vacations. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said he was looking at the option of introducing quarantine hotels for those coming to Britain to prevent the risk of "vaccine-busting" new coronavirus variants entering the country.

Nadhim Zahawi, the minister responsible for the rollout of the United Kingdom's COVID-19 vaccination programme, said details would come later on Tuesday.

**UK to unveil hotel quarantine plans, public told not to book vacations**



◆ **Alphabet Inc's Google said on Monday it will not make contributions from its political action committee this election cycle to any Congress member who voted against certifying the results of the presidential election.** Earlier this month, following the violent storming of the U.S. Capitol, the tech giant had paused all political contributions to reassess its policies toward political contribution. "Following that review, the NetPAC board has decided that it will not be making any contributions this cycle to any member of Congress who voted against certification of the election results," a Google representative said in a statement. Hundreds of former President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the halls of Congress on Jan. 6 in a bid to overturn his election defeat, battling police in the hallways and delaying the certification of President Joe Biden's victory for hours.



**Japan's cabinet approves plan for free COVID-19 vaccines**

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**COVID-19 Countries worst affected**

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	25,874,814	432,031	100,460,000
2 India	10,689,202	153,722	
3 Brazil	8,881,853	217,806	Deaths
4 Russia	3,756,931	70,482	
5 UK	3,669,658	98,531	2,154,268
6 France	3,057,857	73,494	Recovered:
7 Spain	2,697,294	56,208	72,477,910
8 Italy	2,475,372	85,881	New cases
9 Turkey	2,442,350	25,344	
10 Germany	2,158,594	53,837	+181,210
11 Colombia	2,027,746	51,747	New deaths
12 Argentina	1,874,801	47,034	
13 Mexico	1,771,740	150,273	+5,306
14 Poland	1,482,722	35,665	

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	162,486		9,012		127,001	26,473
Saudi Arabia	366,807	+223	6,359	+4	358,340	2,108
UAE	285,147	+3,601	805	+7	259,194	25,148
Kuwait	162,282	+505	957	+3	155,303	6,022
Oman	133,407	+154	1,524	+2	126,409	5,474
Qatar	149,595	+299	248		145,124	4,223

# Biden plans to limit private prisons and transfer of military equipment to police

Reuters | Washington

President Joe Biden is poised to issue executive actions scaling back the use of private prisons and placing new limits on the transfer of military equipment to local law enforcement, according to a person familiar with the matter and a planning document.

The executive actions are part of a broader push by the new administration to roll back controversial policies by Biden's predecessor Donald Trump, promote criminal justice reform and address racial inequity across the United States.

Representatives of the White House and the Justice Department did not respond to requests for comment.

Some of the Biden administration's actions will reinstate policies at the Justice Department that were in effect during the administration of former President Barack Obama, according to the planning document circulated to congressional Democrats by the White House.

Following the fatal police shooting of a black teenager in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, Obama curtailed the federal government's military equipment transfer programme to local law enforcement amid a public outcry over its use.

The Obama-era policy placed limits on the types of equipment police departments could receive, and required them to justify the need for items like helicopters, riot helmets and "flash-bang" grenades.

The move to reduce the use of private prisons is also an Obama-era policy that was championed by then-Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates.

Other potential executive actions in the works include reforms targeting prosecutorial decisions and sentencing, as well as policies involving voting and other civil rights laws.



Detroit police, wearing riot gear, line up next to an armored vehicle in preparation to enforce a curfew following a rally against the death in Minneapolis police custody of George Floyd, in Detroit, Michigan

# Indonesia to dock for



Iranian-flagged crude oil tanker MT Horse is escorted to Batam, Riau Islands, Indonesia

● **The two supertankers, with crew members from Iran and China, were seized on Sunday**

● **The ships were "caught red-handed" transferring oil from MT Horse to MT Freya and that there was an oil spill around the receiving tanker.**

Reuters | Jakarta

The Iranian and Panamanian-flagged vessels seized by Indonesian authorities for suspected illegal oil trans-

fers are making their way to dock at Batam island in the country's Riau Islands Province for further investigation, a Indonesia coast guard spokesman said.

The two supertankers, with crew members from Iran and China, were seized on Sunday in Indonesian waters near Kalimantan island. The MT Horse, owned by the National Iranian Tanker Company and MT Freya, managed by Shanghai Future Ship Management Co, had a total of 61 crew members onboard.

"The ships will arrive in Batam at around 3pm (0600GMT) to 4pm later today," Wisnu Pramandita, spokesman of the Indonesian coast guard, told Reuters.

Wisnu said some of the crew remained in the supertankers,

# Lion cub Simba born in Singapore via artificial insemination

AFP News

The Singapore Zoo has welcomed a lion cub named Simba to its animal kingdom following artificial insemination that officials said Tuesday was a first for the city-state.

It is rare for lions to be conceived through artificial insemination, with the procedure first carried out successfully in 2018 -- resulting in two cubs in South Africa.

Lion populations in the wild have plummeted more than 40 percent over the past two decades, with about 23,000 to 39,000 mature animals left, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature. It lists lions as vulnerable.

Singapore's new cub, named after the main character in Disney's "The Lion King", was conceived with semen from an elderly African lion.

The father Mufasa, who also takes his name from the animated film, was in poor health and did not survive the procedure,



Singapore's new cub is named after the main character in Disney's "The Lion King"

the zoo said. Simba, who was born in October, is being cared for by his

mother Kayla and zookeepers, and is "healthy and inquisitive", officials said.

A video showed Simba being fed from a bottle and playing with a ball.